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Miscellany

BY

JOSEPH STEWART, LL.M.

March-April, 1903

VOL. III

NO. 2

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MARCH-APRIL, 1903

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Radio-Activity and Psychical Emanations

CERTAIN recent discoveries in chemico-physics are of a most interesting character and bring science some closer to the fount of universal energy. I refer to the discoveries of radico-active substances.

Professor Becquerel discovered that salt of uranium, though unstimulated from without, emits invisible radiations which are effective on a photographic plate even after passing through substances opaque to ordinary light. The nature of these radiations has been shown to be partly Röntgen rays and partly cathode rays. Professor Thomson has further shown cathode rays to be exceedingly small particles the thousandth magnitude of the atom, which he has called corpuscles, charged with negative electricity and moving with a velocity of from 70,000 to 120,000 miles a second. "Among all the mysteries associated with matter," says he, "few, if any, are more striking than that afforded by these substances, in no way remarkable in appearance, which, without provocation and without intermission, emit projectiles which travel at a rate compared with which the fastest bullet is absolutely insignificant."

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stances, some—as for instance radium—of vastly greater activity. Radium emits negatively electrified corpuscles which travel with almost the velocity of light.

A very remarkable thing about this is that with this constant stream of radiant matter proceeding outward there is a loss of mass and a loss of energy from the radium which has continued during the inconceivable time radium has existed, and yet it is not exhausted.

“There must have been some very considerable store of energy at the disposal of the radium to enable it to keep up this rate of radiation, and the very interesting question arises, what is the nature of this energy, and how is it stored?”*

In answer to this, Prof. Thomson recounts how from the radio-active thorium there was separated the minute quantity which was intensely radio-active, and which left the remaining thorium inert, and that the active part gradually lost its vigor and the inert part became active again, from which he concluded that the radio-activity is a quality in continual and original production in the thorium itself.

But whence this activity to manifest in the thorium? Science does not answer.

Later it has been discovered that any substance may be made radio-active by charging it with negative electricity under certain conditions, which quality Prof. Thomson believes to be due to the inconceivably rapid discharge of the corpuscles the thousandth part the size of the atom—negative electricity.

Yet a little further in this scientific wonderland. It appears that everything is to some extent radio-active. Prof. Thompson says :

“It is thus, I think, that the leaves of trees and the countless objects on the surface of the earth which are radio-active acquire this property ; they are, in fact, cathodes, discharging cathode rays into the air.

* “Becquerel Rays,” by Prof. Thomson in *Harper's* for January, 1903.

Thus cathode rays, which have only comparatively recently been discovered, and then by the help of most elaborate apparatus, are in all probability so widely distributed and occur so frequently that there is hardly a patch of ground on the earth's surface which does not contain an active source of these rays."

The earth being charged with electricity, every leaf and sharp or pointed object emits these rays of invisible light.

It is probable that the Reichenbach rays—the luminous effects which his clairvoyants declared they saw around the poles of the magnet—are none other than some phenomenon similar to these Becquerel rays.

Thus science now declares a fact regarding inanimate substances similar to that which has long been held by psychic students regarding the human body; and it would appear that if inanimate objects are emitting a subtle form of substance by reason of an energy residing in or manifesting through them, it should not be difficult to entertain the theory that an effluence correlated with the thought and soul-character proceeds from the human organism.

Few traditions are more widespread than that human organisms are in reciprocal relations, producing effects and inducing conditions in others which are the duplication of themselves, either for health or disease. There is much evidence that this is not merely a subjective psychic effect, as through suggestion and response. It would be strange indeed if, in a cosmos where energy is ever present and where matter under its directing power is in the closest reciprocal relation, life-organisms should not be subject to a like order.

It is a very common thing for observing persons to note the effects produced upon the feelings by the mere presence of others. These feelings will vary from those of pleasure or confidence to those of aversion or distrust, and may be entirely independent of suggestions received in communication, or of judgment formed

upon appearances. Everyone knows the subtle influence of the touch of the hand, which differs with individuals. The relief of a headache by the imposition or gentle application of the hands of another is of common occurrence and no doubt many do not have to depend upon faith in the recorded statements for evidences of remarkable cures as a result of apparent transfer of a healing element from one to another. If these results were due wholly to a subjective phenomenon, persons of like appearance would induce similar feelings; and if these cures were effected wholly by subjective response to temperature and sensory stimuli, any object of the same temperature and feeling as the hand would work as remarkable cures.

Historically, there has long been a popular belief that young, vigorous, and healthy persons impart their strength to the older or less healthy. Authorities state that it is detrimental to children to sleep with the aged, though beneficial to the latter.

Evidence of this subtle and reciprocal relation is shown in a more marked degree among natural "sensitives." Contrary to opinion often expressed, this condition of constitution, temperament or unfoldment is not specially an incident of our own time. There have always been these "sensitives" and generally their fate has been most unfortunate because of the ignorance and false beliefs of the people. These individuals often forfeited their lives because of the possession of their unwelcome and misunderstood gifts, the authorities condemning them as possessed of the devil. Sometimes, however, they were tolerated because they were supposed to have been accepted by God as victims and permitted to take the diseases of others who consulted them. Thus Bertrand says of the 'Convulsionaries' of Saint-Médard, "It often happened to the convulsionaries," says Carré de Montgéron, *'to take disease without knowing whether the persons were ill and in ignorance of the nature of their ailments. They were informed*

of these things by the sense of pain they felt in the same parts.' "

There are many instances to be met with now where these similarly constituted persons whom we now call, in convenient parlance, "sensitives," experience this sympathism—"taking on the conditions" of others and suffering from their difficulty by coming into rapport with them. That much of this may be attributed to mental suggestion and subliminal response thereto is no doubt true; but one who has had actual experience with the phenomena and who has not accepted the suggestionists' theory as the last word, must give much weight to the theory of an actual transference of an effluence.

The conditions which render natural sensitives susceptible to these influences may be produced in others by establishing a condition of rapport, as did the old-time "magnetizers."

While these spontaneous instances established the fact that diseased conditions are communicable by rapport, it is equally evident that healthful ones are also as readily transferred.

This was made the basis of the Mesmeric and magnetic healing which, in spite of the later school of hypnotists who claim that their phenomena cover the whole field, is still effective whenever there is one who possesses the power.

Dr. Ochorowicz, in his "Mental Suggestion" says:

"If *disease* is transmitted by contagion, health should be transmitted in the same way. In truth, both express only a relation; they are not things, only states. Health represents harmony of the functions, these being in equilibrium with the influences of the world without. Disease means the opposite of this; it is disharmony of the functions, these not sufficiently withstanding the influences of the environment. If this is so, then health must be, so to speak, *more contagious* by bodily contact than is disease, being more expansive, in that it reacts better outward."

The evidence of this transfer of subtle substance is perceived by a super-sensative organism in several ways. Dr. Ochorowicz described it as "*a breath of cool air, very distinctly felt*" upon his hands when passed above the body of the subject. "This sensation" says he, "was not always of the same intensity, but sometimes, now and then, it was so distinct that it was like a person's breath blown between my fingers." He found that it was independent of temperature.

In my own experience, receptive persons whose organisms readily assimilate this radiation describe to me its effect as of a powerful stimulus to vigor and strength and elevation of feeling, coursing through their beings.

A further evidence of an impartation of influence is found in the exhaustion which is felt by the one from whom it proceeds, if continued long.

Both the giver and the receiver of this influence are conscious of it, but those who use only suggestion and hypnotism in the treatment, and who have none of the magneto-psychic force which distinguishes the possessor thereof, will note no evidence of it in their own experience, nor can they produce the effects by magnetic passes upon other organisms which the possessor can. Says Dr. Ochorowicz: "*An individual physical action; that is magnetism, whether fluid or not. When the operator comes into play as a living body, as a dynamic centre, whose presence is not indifferent, that is assuredly magnetism.*"

Occult students have always affirmed the existence in man of a subtle body and a surrounding aura or sheath indistinguishable by ordinary tests of physics, but visible to the clairvoyant. This aura is evolved by the thought and life of the person and is charged with his vital, mental and spiritual characteristics. Though radiating a subtle energy from the whole being, it is responsive to the thoughts and emotions, may be conserved or dissipated by them, the eyes and hands being especially facile agencies for its dispersion or application.

Many occult phenomena may be attributed to its manifestation. It may impart its elements to an object which when removed from the person still maintains a rapport with him. It may be made to charge a table, much as one may suppose a magnet is charged with electricity, and by its agency the table will move intelligently—at the direction of the subliminal self, according to some; at the behest of discarnate souls, according to others.

It is of this psycho-physical element that M. Aksakof writes as follows :

“Under the name of Animism, we include unconscious psychical phenomena, which show themselves outside the limits of the medium’s body—*extra-mediumistic* operations, as thought-transference, telepathy, telekinesis, or movements of objects without contact, and, finally, materializations. We have here the highest manifestation of the psychical duplication; the elements of the personality overstep the limits of this body, and manifest themselves at a distance not only in psychical, but also in physical, and even plastic operation, up to the point of complete externalization and objectification.”

We should not neglect the facts nor disregard the knowledge of our subtler constitution.

Do not allow yourself to be persuaded that there is not merit in discovering for yourself the thought which others have discovered before you. Accept with pleasure all the wisdom that comes to you from others, but esteem more highly the power of originality within yourself to self-evolve it. The awakening and the exercise of this self-origination is a way to realization. It is vastly better to create than to borrow; and it is of no consequence that another has created the same for himself before you.

The Symbol and the Mind

A FRIEND tells me that an "occultist" informs him that the number 11 is a very bad number, and he inquires what basis there is for such dictum. I have replied that there is absolutely nothing in the number itself to justify ill repute, and that it is unlucky for him only who believes it to be such. And this suggests some remarks which may point a new thought moral.

We are ever brought back to the proposition that we are dealing with but one real magician, and that is the mind. How like one who stands under a great cliff are we, and, as we speak, shudder at the many voices that come back to us in echo. There are no people concealed in those bluffs, and if we did not speak our voice would not return in multiplicity. So the mind, yet a stranger to itself, invests external objects with attributes which exist alone in itself. It may agree to believe any chimera, and, arranging its thoughts in accordance with that belief, so affect the tendency and choice of acts as to actually inflict evil upon itself.

There is no obvious relation between 11 and oneself. Is there a subtle, unperceived one? No direct one can be imagined. Is there an indirect one? Is 11 related to some other thing which in turn is related to oneself? One can easily give rein to fanciful imagination and construct such a theory. For instance, 11 destroys the harmony of the ten Sephiroth, it is one too many for the ten divine emanations. Thus it is not a symbol which those souls who believe in the Tens would select. They would not see their idea suggested in its number. On the other hand, those beings who believing in the reality of the Tens, yet are fallen from the state of their adoration, will recognize in 11 a symbol of their state. If you have a number 11 in your material constitution these souls will note it in passing

and be inclined to tarry with you, while the adorers of the Tens will pass you by. You become a link in a chain of inharmonious thought. This is given to show merely how easy it is to construct a fanciful theory which would not be incredible, yet based on pure assumption with no facts to sustain it.

What is the magic power of number, of the charm, or of the symbol? It is the marvelous magic of the mind. In the Age of Faith and strange hallucinations what did the student and believer in the Evil One do when Satan appeared to him? Remember that he believed in Satan, and that a *subjective* apparition is possible where there is belief, even though there is no corresponding objective reality. We will say that the intrusion occurred in his study, where his mind would assume subjective phases most readily. He had another belief which was just as strong—an antidote—a faith in the efficacy of a certain symbol. He grasped his sword (he always conveniently wore one in those days), and holding it up by the blade, lifted the hilt upright before him, thus presenting the *cross* to the Evil One. According to tradition, it was always effective; *exeunt* Satan. The mind created and the mind dispelled; but the symbol was a necessary aid in its operation.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud, that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is backed like a weasel.

Ham. Or, like a whale.

Pol. Very like a whale.

Recently, near an obscure village in Tuscany, the peasants stole away in little groups to an adjacent valley where they spent the night in a religious ecstasy during which, in gazing upon a certain oak tree, they "saw" the Madonna. It was probably noted first by some psychic who had the faculty of "seeing" his subjective conceptions in apparent externalization

when gazing steadily at a point, and losing the sense of objective consciousness. So others who were strongly imbued with faith could "see" their subjective images under like conditions. Andrew Lang says that, in the Dordogne, in the eighties of the last century, the French peasants used to "see" the Madonna when gazing in a dark hole of an ordinary field wall. I do not intimate that there are not objective facts concomitant with some visions. I mention these instances merely to show the subjective creative faculty of the mind even when the objective reality is missing.

Let us consider the magic of another number. In about the year 960 Bernard, a hermit of Thuringia, preached a sermon from the text of Revelation—"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations, * * * and another book was opened which is the Book of Life, * * * and the sea gave up the dead, * * * and death and hell gave up the dead, * * * and they were judged every man according to his works, * * * and I saw a new heaven and a new earth."

He prophesied that the end of the world would occur in 992. The monk, Druthmare, fixed the date as March 24, 1000.

The terror of the people was so great on that day that in many cities they sought refuge in the churches where they remained prostrate until midnight, awaiting the celestial announcement.

From this epoch, many of the substantial gifts of land and goods to the monasteries date. Many who did not donate to the church sold their belongings for a trifle. If the world was to end it was useless to make further efforts, other than to prepare for the event.

Contemporaneous writings show that this momentous period was a most remarkable one for the people of Europe. From 987 to 1060 desolation and devastation scourged the land and people. Of these seventy-three

years, forty-eight were of famine and pestilence. The great plague devastated the southern portions of France and made forty thousand victims in Aquitania. Famine prevailed everywhere. Raoul Glaber, who lived at the time wrote—"The price of a muid of wheat rose to sixty gold sous; the rich waxed thin and pale, the poor gnawed the roots of trees, and many were in such extremity as to devour human flesh." The details are too terrible to be spread upon the pages of this work where we wish to portray only the lights and not the shadows of the human mind.

Can any one doubt what magic it was which caused the Angel of Death to domicile in that part of the earth, and that brought every conceivable mental and moral calamity upon that mournful age, affecting every material relation of life as well? It was the universal belief of the people that the *one thousand years* was about to elapse and the judgment day was at hand, and their consequent terror of mind and abandonment of material interests. It was the power of terror, of fear, of mental, moral and physical abandon, to create the conditions for the plague, to make famine possible, to completely demoralize human life. There was absolutely no potency in the year 1000.

Signs and symbols and numbers are but the indicia of mental agreements. Those agreements or beliefs become powerful in influencing the destiny of the believer's life in proportion as his mind is surrendered in bondage to them. Consult Potter's *Antiquities of Greece*, and you will find that the ancient Greek was in mental bondage to innumerable beliefs in good and bad signs and omens, to be seen in every department of nature and field of experience. All of our popular superstitions of the sort are at least as old as they. These irrational fears dogged the lives of even the most eminent. Suetonius tells us that Augustus Cæsar was particular to clothe his right side first in dressing, and Pliny says that that emperor narrowly escaped destruction in a

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mutiny of his soldiers on a day when he put his left shoe on first.

If the mind agrees that an omen or sign is an ill one, it will tend in all its thoughts to actualize that belief. By such recognition it incorporates it into the mental life of possibilities, and assumes an attitude of harmonious assimilation with all extraneous facts which will tend to make the possibility a reality.

Sudden panic or consternation having been held an evil omen, the army of the Gallic general Brennus, having been thrown into a terror the night after defeat by the Greeks, fell upon themselves and completely exterminated each other; and the Persians suffered a great defeat at the hands of the Athenians because of this same superstition. The mind enslaved by a belief in evil may thus actually enact the evil, or become paralyzed and ineffective for its prevention.

Let us take a modern case. A confiding, responsive person visits a palmist and is told that a serious illness will assail her during a certain year. She thinks quite lightly of it at the time, and the bloom of health does not fade. As the fateful period draws near she recalls the prophesy and remembers that some other things of the past were quite correctly told—psychometrically, perhaps. Apprehension grows stealthily until the life becomes haunted by the fear of the illness. Is there any mystery about the collapse which surely follows? The year finally passes, the threatened danger is removed, the apprehension vanishes and all is again sunshine. What is this but the power of the mind executing its own belief?

In congratulating oneself on having discarded the No. 11-belief he should examine his special mental agreements and see if he has not substituted some other as useless or harmful.

YET every heart contains perfection's germ.

—*Shelley.*

A Typical Mystic Experience

IN this age of extreme concentration upon, and concern for, the practical facts of the environmental world, and the great regard for conventional standards of experience, little appreciation is felt for that side of the life which is mystical. So insistently has the conventional standard of average experience been urged as the sane one, that there is a general impression that the mystic experience is out of place in our rational lives, and that mystics are only to be found in the old books of the past centuries.

These conclusions are wrong. The mystic characteristic is too fundamental to be extinguished by even so severely a matter-of-fact life as our civilization compels. The experience is consistent with the well developed man and has a high value for him who has known it and for others as well, as was shown in the last number.

It is not strange, however, that one who has had this experience should shrink from the curious inquiry and wonder of the world. In respect of that experience he feels himself an alien, with no hope of an acquaintance with those who have not known those states.

Those who are truly interested, not from idle curiosity but from a desire to know their own possibilities and learn also of the deeper truths of Being which are suggested by the experience, can derive much benefit from its thoughtful consideration. For these, I am giving below a brief narrative of the experience of a correspondent who has known the true state and who has very kindly consented that I may do so.

"I will write briefly of some of the inner experiences which I mentioned. I am thirty-seven years of age and unmarried. I would not study in school and was consequently taken out and put to work. I did

not care for society but preferred to roam the woods and fields. My mother died when I was fifteen, and two years later I left home.

"I became conscious of a Presence about my fifteenth year, but was rather wild and did not pay much attention to it. My mother died at this time and it seemed as though she too was near me and continued to be for some years.

"Six years after I left home I became conscious of a desire for knowledge of God, but all efforts to find Him were futile. For a period of five years I believed in nothing, and was a rank pessimist. The strain was breaking me down in health, and I heard later that death was a certainty unless I could be braced up.

"Without any special intent I began to take an hour or two each evening to rest. I took a comfortable position, emptied all my thoughts, and endeavored not to move a muscle for two hours. The benefit to my health was wonderful. This I kept up for two years. I grew optimistic and my general health improved rapidly. One evening I had finished my hour and was about to turn to my book when a remarkable experience came to me. I had not turned down the light, but had turned my back to it and closed my eyes. As I opened them I felt peculiar. Then a *White Light* came down through the ceiling and slowly filled the room. I was perfectly conscious, and looked around and noted things, especially the lamp, which seemed a faded yellow light. This continued, perhaps, one minute, and then I became conscious of thrill after thrill coursing through my body from head to foot. I seemed to be, and was, vibrating in every part. In ecstasy I cried, 'Glory to God.' These thrills continued for several minutes, then the Light gradually passed upward and away.

"This occurred October 7, 1896, at 8:30 p. m. I name this date as my birth.

"The next day at about the same hour I had a similar experience, but of briefer duration, and on the following day at noon a still briefer one, after which they ceased.

"Five years later (October 4, 1901) in the afternoon while in the country a visitation of another nature came to me. I became possessed of an ecstasy and unveiling which is impossible to describe. Then I KNEW that all was good, that all life was *eternal*, and that I should simply trust God to lead. It seemed as though an immense burden was cast off, and I was FREE. I

whistled and sang and shouted like a happy child, and on the way back to town I 'walked on air,' and could hardly suppress exclamations of joy.

"The experience of the afternoon was followed in the evening (about 8:30) by a period of ecstasy so intense that I felt that if it did not cease I would not survive. This lasted perhaps fifteen minutes, then passed rapidly away. The spiritual revelation followed in which I felt and knew the omnipresence of God and goodness, and of my relationship to the universe.

"I may say that I had never read or heard of experiences of a similar nature. After my first experience in 1896 no revelations followed. I was anxious to know the meaning of the visitation, and at the time wrote to several persons whom I thought might enlighten me, but received no reply and made no further attempt to secure an explanation from without.

"The day following this last experience the ecstasy came in a milder form, and since has ceased, though have had innumerable thrills of momentary duration.

"I early had a sense of two worlds—a visible and an invisible one—and at times seemed to be able to penetrate the atmosphere and into the latter, but never beyond the threshold.

"I have often experienced the sensation of physical lightness and buoyancy. During one of the hours of meditation I left the body and floated around the room. I was perfectly conscious, noted everything, particularly the body. I had no fear. Upon wondering if I could get back, I was there.

"During the last few years the guidance has been overwhelming; any effort to do things my way has made discord; when I am led all is harmony. The guidance comes in all things.

"My friends say I am an Atheist, yet I see God in all life and realize the protecting Presence of an enveloping and permeating atmosphere of love.

"Now a word for the healing. I had been troubled with neuralgia all my life. Doctors said it couldn't be cured. One night after I had retired, (this was after the experience of illumination), the pains gripped me in the chest and I called out to God for relief. I was wide awake with eyes open. Out of the darkness appeared a patch of white light. Like a feather it settled slowly until it lay upon my breast. Instantaneously the pain ceased and while I wondered the light dissipated and disappeared. The next occurrence of the pain I desired the light; it came and I was healed. One noon, as I

sat in meditation, a spiral stream of light descended, entered the head, and with a thrill passed through the body. Since then I have used the Light whenever necessary. Often the healing is instantaneous; again, it acts slowly. Sometimes a cloud seems to settle over me and I do not feel the Presence. Then I *wait*. Sometimes when this cloud is over me the Light does not respond to the call. Then I wait patiently, and sooner or later it always comes. Drugs fail to act on me; the Light is the only remedy I can use.

"I take a spiritual bath regularly four times daily; it is more necessary than food or sleep.

"I do not attend church. All days are Sunday and God is ever speaking to me. I have intense yearnings sometimes for human friends but have found none who understand, and I have recourse to writing, painting and books. For a time I was led to writing; now it is to painting. Books and reading are not of much value, except as a means of companionship. Knowledge and wisdom come from within. I have visions often, and get ideas for painting from them. I often have the sense of companionship with persons who have 'passed on,' and converse with them—at least I think so.

"Content am I that frequently I am conscious of the Divine Harmony; that I am an instrument of expression for Infinite Spirit; that I am breathing deeply of the universal life; that I am being absorbed into universal harmony; that I *realize now* the indwelling Presence.

"Is all this a tiresome repetition of old thoughts and common experience? Perhaps many others have similar experiences. I wanted to tell every one I knew of it at first; I keep silence now."

HAVE you a purpose but fear the lack of time to attain it? Fear not; you do not know what a fund you have in the bank of Eternity. If that purpose be worthy, pursue it regardless of the thought of time. Let the years see the attainment if they may; if not, hold to the purpose and remember that the future is yours.

Notes on the Fire-Ordeal

II

IN previous articles, instances have been given mainly of the fire-walk executed upon stones or boulders heated from either above or below by burning logs. The exception to this was the reference to the ceremony of the *Nistinares* who "climb the pyre of glowing embers and dance to the time in the fire and utter prophesies."

In the literature of the subject occasional reference with more or less detail is found to the performances of fakirs of Southern India and adjacent localities in which glowing coals, and not stones, are used. For such particular cases this fact disposes of the explanation which has been offered, that though the boulders are intensely heated, such heat is applied from below, and the boulders being of a remarkably poor conductivity, the upper portions are comparatively cool.

I am fortunate in securing an account of such an occurrence, first-hand and from a modern traveler—Mr. Frank N. Merwin—whose heretofore unpublished statement is given here. The reader can feel assured of the truth of the facts stated, whatever explanation he may be inclined to adopt.

3119 FLORA AVE.,
KANSAS CITY, MO.
Dec. 24, 1902.

MR. JOSEPH STEWART,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEAR SIR:—The writer witnessed a fire-walk in March, 1901, in a locality known as Tintown within the corporate limits of Durban, South Africa. It was a religious ceremony (of the Hindus) near the conclusion of a two weeks' festival held annually at that place. It was public and free to all who might choose to attend. All the various sects of Hindus participated in the festival, but the sect to which the fire-walkers belonged is unknown to the writer. They were, how-

ever, young men under the age of 30 years as their appearance indicated; and as claimed, they had been selected in infancy and pledged to a life of strict celibacy, preparatory to becoming priests in case they proved worthy of such distinction. The fire-walk was one of the many ordeals which they were required to undergo as novitiates.

Six persons performed in the fire for about 10 minutes, after which two more joined them, the whole performance covering about 15 minutes.

These fire-pits had been arranged within a radius of a few hundred feet, and at each pit similar performances were given simultaneously. The audience around the pit which claimed the writer's attention consisted of about fifty English and Dutch people and 250 Hindus, Arabs, and a few Kafirs.

Pits were dug two feet deep and eight feet in diameter (circular) which the writer saw at 7 o'clock of that morning. The pits were then filled with small logs and brush-wood—no special wood being used, except that which was convenient—and the fire lighted in the pits at 8 o'clock and kept burning all day by the addition of fresh wood from time to time, so that in the evening the pits were filled with live coals and ashes to within about six inches of the top, thus leaving a bed of live coals and ashes, one and one-half feet deep. It was positively a glowing pit of fire, as hot as could be made with wood burned in the open air.

As to the degree of heat the writer cannot particularize, except to affirm that while standing for a moment of inspection, very near to the edge of the pit, he was compelled to shield his face with his hands from the radiating heat. It was also observed that the ground near the pit was baked dry by the protracted heat. Also there were no "cold stones" nor logs of wet or decayed wood in the pit. Whatever may be the opinion of the performance, the *bona fides* of the fire will surely stand without impeachment.

One of the fire-walkers carried in his hand a small stick which seemed to serve no special purpose. The others carried no leaves, bushes or article of any kind whatsoever. They were dressed only with the customary loin-cloths—otherwise they were naked from the soles of their feet to the crown of their heads. The writer has no evidence as to the use or non-use of chemical preparations as a means of immunity from the heat.

Twelve priests and the six fire-walkers were assembled in a hut nearby. When everything was ready they marched forth in three's—two priests leading each fire-walker, one on each side, supporting him by the arms. The fire-walkers appeared to be stupefied, their heads drooping from side to side very much like one who is intoxicated. They were led near to the pit and halted, the priests taking position in front, facing them and for a few moments mumbled prayers or Mantrams as they term it. At the moment of some signal which the writer did not distinctly recognize, the six performers were instantly dispelled of their stupidity and they whirled about in extreme frenzy; meantime a din of tom-toms and horns was sounded and continually kept going until the close of the performance about 15 minutes later. They whirled about and sprang into the pit, whirling while in the fire, then jumping out, then back again into the pit. They jostled each other sometimes seizing each other by the arms and continue to whirl. Only one of them deliberately stopped while in the pit and sat down in the coals of fire for a few seconds, jumping out with his loin cloth aflame which he extinguished by brushing and slapping with his hands. Others would jump into the pit and run about in it, making the circuit five or six times before jumping out. Before the close two Hindu spectators, without clothing except loin-cloths, also jumped into the pit and quickly sprang out.

The pit being approximately 24 feet in circumference and some performers running this circuit five or six times before jumping out, it is probable that they were on the live coals 20 to 30 seconds, but the reader can make his own deduction from the facts above stated—those of very rapid motions and the dimensions of the pit.

While in the fire the faces of the performers were contorted into horrible grimaces as if they suffered extreme agony, but they uttered no sound.

At the close each performer was led back to the hut assisted by two priests. They appeared to be completely exhausted. This weakness may have been assumed as a professional role but the writer regarded it as a legitimate consequence of the 15 minutes of broiling they had been subjected to. At any rate he has no desire to reach the goal of perfection by means of such purifying agency as red hot coals.

The writer had no opportunity for ascertaining if any had suffered burns; however, he recognized one of

the fire-walkers in a street parade on the following day. He has been told by Hindus that the priests have power to bestow immunity from burning, and that they get their power from God. This *logic* may be sound, but the *facts* may be otherwise.

The Dutch and English people in Africa generally assume that the fire-walkers make use of some chemical treatment of the skin. This hypothesis is perhaps the simplest explanation that will reconcile the facts and so arrive at a rational solution. But others hold that the *hypothesis* must be proven before it is good as an explanation.

The following named gentlemen would no doubt corroborate the facts above stated: Mr. H. Heinze, American Photo. Novelty Co., Beach, Durban, South Africa. Mr. D. E. Hennessy, Goods Department, Natal Government Ry., Durban, South Africa.

Mr. — Rennie, British Consul, Durban, South Africa.

Very truly yours,

FRANK N. MERWIN.

(Dictated to and written down by D. E. Merwin.)

Assuming that the reason for this exemption may be looked for in some psychical state of the walkers, as has been heretofore suggested, the following features are noteworthy.

The ceremony was a religious one. The fire-walkers were candidates for the priesthood; were said to have been selected in infancy and pledged to a life of celibacy. For a time (apparently of preparation) preceding the feat they appeared to be in a stupor, which, however, was dispelled instantaneously (apparently by the attending priests) and their psychical state was changed as effectively as that of a hypnotic subject who responds to the commands of the agent. This stupor was succeeded by "extreme frenzy," apparently similar to the frenzy under which the Bulgarian *Nistinares* dance in the glowing embers at their religious festival. These Hindus claim that the exemption is secured by the exercise of a power conferred by God—a claim similar to that of all others who perform like feats.

Moments with Our Correspondents

THE following bit of analysis comes to me from Dr. Burgess of 373 Geary St., San Francisco, Cal., the author of the little brochure "A Question of Consciousness."

When the ego shall have fully realized its divinity—when "the dewdrop slips into the Shining Sea"—what will then distinguish it in consciousness from that with which it merges? Dr. Burgess suggests that there is something which must ever be individual in the consciousness, and that is realization.

No doubt it will be a long time before the personal characteristic of consciousness shall become subordinate to that of individuality, and when it, carrying with it all the results of personal experience, shall know itself to be divine, nothing which is truly valuable to the individual will be lost in the higher realization.

The question, Why this differentiation from the divine and an evolution from omniscience back to omniscience, if that is all there is to it? is always puzzling. There is the suggestion here of a resultant not included in the original.

The following is Dr. Burgess' suggestion.

Something Unknown to Omniscience

It seems an absurd contradiction in terms, yet it must be true that there is something which is perfectly known to the individual mind, and which is known to none other, not even to omniscience. Obviously, omniscience knows what the individual knows. Nevertheless, there is something the knowledge of which is the individual's own and can not be gained by another. Description, observation, intuition, alike fail to convey precise information as to this something which, while it is ever the same thing to each

and every one, is never the same thing to another, or to all. Yet there is nothing which is occult or mysterious about it; for it is simply one's personal realization of experience.

For instance, you know, and I know, and omniscience must know, that I live; but neither you nor omniscience can ever know precisely how I realize the fact of my own existence. Omniscience could not fail to know more perfectly than you do every item of your personal experience; yet it could not realize your realization of a single one of them. Your realization depends upon an inherent faculty peculiar to your own mind. Another—and especially omniscience—might very well imagine what you would be apt to feel under given circumstances and conditions; but that is all. If it were possible for two minds to acquire knowledge of everything, and to acquire it under exactly the same conditions, there could, nevertheless, be no merging of the two, nor of both into the infinitude of omniscience. For it is memory, not alone of experience, but of the realization of experience, which establishes the perdurability of conscious individuality. Thus the two could become "one with God" without losing oneness of self. In this fact lies proof of human immortality. For it is unquestionably true that *perfect* memory is a faculty of subjective mind which is not, like objective memory, dependent upon organic function. And subjective mind is simply that subjectively conscious condition in Infinite Mind which so largely consists of an individual capacity for realization and unfailing recollection of personal experience—a condition which is cognized by objective consciousness as the mind or soul.

Therefore not the facts, but the individual realization of human experience, must ever remain unknown to even omniscience itself.

O. O. BURGESS, M. D.

Means of Meditation

Meditation (*Samadhi*)

(*Raja Yoga VIII*)

THE last-mentioned stage was Contemplation, in which there is "a flow of the mental function moulded into the object of meditation." This is a lofty state which few of us ever reach in its perfection and maintain for any considerable length of time. It is a condition of blended thought with consciousness proper, which is among the greatest powers there are in human life to transform the self, to create desirable (and sometimes, unhappily, undesirable) states. It is a natural means of *becoming* what you think, consciously or unconsciously. This union of the mind and its processes with an ideal, so completely attained that the thought flows into its objects, is the precondition for many remarkable self cures, as well as great changes in the view-point of life which so radically modifies existence.

In the practice of Meditation this is a high state and discloses to one some of the supernormal qualities of consciousness. But it is not, says Yoga, the highest attainable. This higher state is true Meditation or *Samadhi*.

By referring to the "Raja Yoga Chart" at the beginning of this series of papers, you will find in section A B C D the heading "Conscious or concrete meditation." Opposite it one of the divisions is designated "4. Egotistic-Perception of self." You will find this last to be divided into "1. The human self as distinguished from Nature," and "2. The Supreme Self as distinguished from human self and Nature." Contemplation is concerned with "1. The human self," and Meditation (*Samadhi*) is concerned with the next stage—"The Supreme Self."

When the contemplation becomes free from all idea of difference between the contemplation, the object and its contemplator, then only is true meditation attained, and the mind is freed from all attachment or limitation and exists in the consciousness of its divinity.

In the last number, in connection with "Contemplation," I suggested that the concept be I AM DIVINE. This contemplates the human self as "the place of the Omnipotent Supreme Lord." But there is still the separateness of the human and divine selves. So, when one in *Samadhi*, by contemplating the Supreme Spirit wherein all human selves are dissolved, becomes free from all this idea of difference,—when the human self, which is uselessly conceived to be the master of its actions, is resolved into the Supreme Spirit apart from its limitations, which is the Self of every existence—"then," says Vivekananda, "the glory of the soul, untrammelled by the distractions of the mind or the emotions of the body, will shine in its full effulgence. And the Yogi will find himself as he is and as he always was, the essence of knowledge, the immortal, the all-pervading."

Thus we have sketched through the essential features of the eight stages of Yoga, classified under the statement of the means of meditation. They form the basis for all work in the attainment of the supernormal states of consciousness by rational method.

We find this method to be one of purification of the mind; of consecration to the attainment of a lofty state of thought; of control of the psychic energy; of control of the mind to the extent of rendering it superior to the distractions of sense, and steady and uninterrupted in its processes—concentration. We find the process of employing the control of the mind for the attainment of its higher states to be one of elimination of the environmental consciousness and of abstraction from the legion of things and thoughts, objective and subjective, which continually hold the mind in its ordinary state.

We find the result to be the realization of a transcendent state of consciousness and of new faculties and powers.

We find that these are essentially the same as have been experienced spontaneously by mystics, prophets, and seers, and by great spiritual leaders and teachers. We note that the results are, in their nature, similar to those shown in supernormal states known to psychic research, and the methods by which they are attained furnish conditions which are known to be favorable to the production of such states.

It is fair to conclude, therefore, that this is a method of minimizing, if not wholly eliminating, for the time the objective consciousness, and inducing the emergence of the subliminal. It may be that the degree to which it is carried may reveal not only what psychic research has disclosed in the subliminal consciousness, but relations between that and the universal consciousness—the ineffable bliss and knowledge which the *Yogi* and some of our occidental mystics have claimed to have experienced.

But, says the *Yoga*, the approach to this state is dangerous and its approximation is misleading unless it is attained regularly and with knowledge and mastery. Unless this is done there is a blending of error, of false philosophy and of superstition, with the loftier experiences, which vitiates most of the conclusions the subject draws from them.

In recognizing the transcendent character of the attainment we need not accept wholly the philosophy with which it is associated.

The value of a study of this branch of *Yoga* is found, first, in the disclosures it makes of the higher states of consciousness; next, in the discovery of the similarity between them and those we have long known in mysticism, and are just beginning to study in psychic phenomena; and last, in the admirable suggestions it furnishes as to methods for a system suitable to the

spirit and needs of our age and people. Such a system need not aim further than the attainment of greater conscious control of our psychic energies, the control of the mind through systematic concentration, the art of relaxation of mind in its mental and bodily manifestations, the recognition and encouragement of the emerging subliminal monitions and states, and their blending with the normal consciousness as well as their realization in greater degree by specific effort. All these have been, in a measure, presented in former numbers under appropriate subjects.

I RECALL that Maeterlinck said that men dare not be silent in the presence of those from whom they would conceal their thoughts. It is a more or less common saying that men sometimes talk to hide what they really think. There is a truth here. It is true that oftentimes one feels more exposed in thought when silent than when speaking. Instinct, with great wisdom, appraises us of the subtle communication that exists between minds independently of words.

How often do we act upon this! Have you never noticed how full of words the surface-friendship is, and how they drop away and cease to be of use when the friendship deepens? They who find companionship without wordy conversation understand each other far better than any words could convey. If you have not some friend with whom you can walk or sit without conversation and yet feel at ease and satisfied, I fear you do not know the highest friendship. And then, you know by tradition and perhaps by experience how useless words become when the soul comes into the state of love.

All this is communication upon the inner plane. There is a Silence in which awakened souls know each other without words.

Etchings

The Spirits of Gobi

THERE is a marvelous thing related of this Desert of Gobi, which is that when travellers are on the move by night, and one of them chances to lag behind or to fall asleep or the li' e, when he tries to gain his company again he will hear spirits talking, and will suppose them to be his comrades. Sometimes the spirits will call him by name; and thus sha'l a traveller ofttimes be led astray so that he never finds his party, and in this way many have perished. Sometimes the stray travellers will hear, as it were, the tramp and hum of a great cavalcade of people away from the real line of road, and taking this to be their own company they will follow the sound; and when the day breaks they find that a cheat has been put on them and that they are in an ill plight. Even in the daytime one hears those spirits talking, and sometimes you shall hear the sound of a variety of musical instruments, and still more commonly the sound of drums. Hence in making this journey it is customary for travellers to keep close together. All the animals, too, have bells at their necks, so they can not easily get astray, and at sleeping time a signal is put up to show the direction of the next march. Thus it is that the Desert is crossed.—Marco Polo.

I do not think life is a desert, and especially do I not regard the quest for the golden-fleece of Higher Thought as a journey through such. Such a life should be verdant with healthful thought rather than a waste relieved only by an occasional oasis, and filled with realization rather than with the elusive allurements of mirage. Yet how like are these spirits of Gobi to a certain other brood; and in the crossing of our metaphysical Gobi how many there are who are deceived by their fascinations for the allurements that lie off in the parched sand-hills and stray away and are lost for the time!

It is said that when one enters upon the Path he is subjected to certain temptations in order to test his worthiness and fitness to advance further. No doubt it is merely a process of natural selection in the higher life. He sees more clearly than before that there must be a choice made between certain paths, and if he is not ready to choose the higher he falls a victim to the temptation of the lower. If there is imperfect appreciation of and desire for the truly spiritual,—if he lags behind the caravan or falls asleep—many are the voices that speak to him out of the surrounding waste, calling him off to join some phantom caravan while he becomes lost to the true one which moves on.

Among the spirits that call from the envioning waste are the allurements of personal gain, of selfish ambition, of misuse of power. When in the pursuit of higher things one seeks gold instead of Light; when he follows Truth to make a merchandise of it; when he desires illumination to dazzle the world rather than for illumination itself; when he turns the power of attainment to the selfish influencing of others or to force the acquisition of material things—viewing attainment as a means to sordid ends; then is he straying and listening to the spirits that call from the phantom caravan that is lost in the desert and travels and travels, but reaches *nowhere*.

Ah, these are indeed familiar spirits and will oft-times call the traveller by name, and he will think he is with the real caravan until the mental mirage dissolves and he finds he has strayed off into the wastes.

"And at sleeping time a signal is put up to show the direction of the next march." Keep you that signal ever before you, and let it be the love of Truth for Truth alone.

MAN is of soul and body formed for deeds
Of high resolve.—*Shelley*.

New-time Faith and Prophecy

From time to time I have given in these sketches gems of thought expressive of the higher philosophy from ancient and modern thinkers, with commentary. I offer the following, of exceptional excellence, culled from a brochure entitled "Adam's Answer," by my old-time friend L. W. Keplinger and which, though deeply philosophic, comes to me out of the busy professional world—a fact not insignificant in these times of thought-readjustments. They will take their place among the true prophecies of dauntless faith and clear insight into truth.

*"He farthest sees who hopeth most,
And as the present holds the future
Close concealed within its grasp,
So the real is the ideal
In the involuted bud,
And every high ideal in character
Or art, is a true prophet's vision
Of a glory which the future shall unfold."*

He who hopes sees the end, though *in futuro*. Nor is that end so separated as it appears, for even now the future evolves out of the present. The ideal, too, is involved in the real, and every art- or character-ideal is the prophet's vision of the unfolding future.

*"I may have always been, and even now
May have no separate life. I will not fret
Futurity with idle questioning,
But I believe the breath which eons since
Waked latent fires, whereof I ever was
And am, to growing flame, still feeds those fires,
While eons more, in long extended line,
Await their turn to feed no waning fires."*

A true immortality is this that ever was as well as ever will be, that concerns itself happily with the present without too fretful question as to the future; and

a sublime belief is this, that the Consciousness that awakened latent fires into one's being, still sustains them and will so continue through the innumerable coming eons!

"I share reality,

And naught is real which savors not of soul.

Not fleeting form, but that which stays am I.

Though in the wave I still am of the sea,

And in every wave the self-same sea

Still swells and falls, so also I may rise

And fall, and ever more may rise and fall,

And if Lethean gulfs should intervene,

Why mourn the width of gulf that lies between?"

Forms change, but do not mistake them for the immortal I, which stays when forms dissolve. Do not forget either, that the I is but a part of the whole, as the wave is a part of the sea, and the essence of the whole rises alike in every I, as does the sea swell in every wave. And if, perchance, we come and go ever and anon as does the wave rise and fall, why mourn the gulf, when—wave and sea being essentially alike—in that seeming hiatus the wave essentially can never be less than wave or sea?

"I hold the occult tendency of men

And things to be their most essential part,

And all that modifies results is real

And of this wondrous universe a part.

The fragment seen leaves man bereft of hope

And God a doubtful presence unrerered

But my frail tongue exalts the fact unseen,

The power unknown."

The unseen and the unknown are the reality. Results are not more real than their hidden causes, and both are parts of the universe. The seen fragment is inexplicable without the unseen fact, and this unseen is the essential part of man and things.

*"With larger growth the very dreams
Of our unconscious past shall be recalled,
Shall be explained, and every prophecy
Of soul shall be amply fulfilled. With all
Its vaunted harmony this universe
Were else a maimed and fragmentary thing
Forever barriered by a measureless,
Unsatisfied desire."*

What promise of the new-time can offer more—that with the larger growth the unconscious past shall ultimately become revealed, as well as every prophecy of soul be fulfilled? The universal harmony will else be incomplete.

These are thoughts that belong to the inspiration of the new faith, that declare the growing confidence in the divinity of man and the unity of all, and the sanity of the universe.

BOOK REVIEWS.

MAN VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE. By C. W. LEADBEATER.
8vo. 144 pp. Cloth, \$2.50 net. John Lane, Publisher, 67 Fifth Ave., New York.

This is a notable book in several respects. It will be deeply interesting to every student of the real man and welcomed by all acquainted with Mr. Leadbeater's previous works. There are interesting chapters on the planes of nature, man's vehicles, the outpourings of the Spirit, reincarnation, but in philosophy and conclusions Theosophic in doctrine. A most valuable part follows in the exposition of the several subtle bodies of man, invisible to normal sight but visible to the clairvoyant. The development of man is shown in types from the savage to the adept, and illustrated by plates in colors showing the auras, with accompanying significance of the colors. The author says this feature is based on the studies of trained clairvoyants. Every student of these subjects will find it a desirable book.

The typography and other book-making features are excellent.

ELIZABETH TOWNE'S EXPERIENCES IN SELF-HEALING.
By herself. Small, 68 pp. Paper, 50 cents. Elizabeth Towne, Publisher, Holyoke, Mass.

The narrative of personal experience has a specially instructive value, probably because it is at once theory and application. The author here has written an interesting sketch of her experience. She tells how she "healed" herself of hurry, worry and irritability, and physical ailments; how she relinquished striving and followed her inclinations and desires as the leading of the Spirit. The whole is instructive and contains much good thought, but as a philosophy of life is marred by too great emphasis on the acquisition of wealth.

THESE ARE MY JEWELS. By STANLEY WATERLOO.
8vo., 232 pp. Cloth, \$1. Coolidge & Waterloo,
87 Washington St., Chicago, Ill.

This is a book written for the young people, but is full of incidents that are familiar to and of interest to all.

It will be found very helpful to many parents, who, believing in the ideas and aims of Higher Thought, desire to make a practical application of them in the character-building of the young. It teaches them to become fearless, kindhearted and observing, and is strongly optimistic. The views expressed against the phenomena of spiritualism, however, are not in accordance with the best conclusions of the day.

Of Possible Interest

January *Mind*, 569 Fifth Ave., New York, has a biographical sketch by Charles Brodie Patterson, of the Editor of *REALIZATION* with portrait of the latter and his article on "Psychic Research in the New Thought."

THE ESOTERIC ART OF LIVING

By Joseph Stewart, L.L. M.

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 - V.—Self-Revelation.
 - VI.—Subliminal Consciousness.
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